

## **Domesticity and Drudgery: The Roles of Women in Jacksonian America**

Supplement: [Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood"](#)

Bailey, Chapter 14

Zinn, Chapter 6

ADD documents on Lowell Mills and Mary Paul

In what ways did changing economic and social conditions of the 1820s-1850s impact the roles of women of various classes? What economic transformation drives (and depends upon) both the Cult of Domesticity and the employment of women at Lowell Mills? How do you explain this apparent contradiction?

Identifications:

cult of domesticity, cult of true womanhood, doctrine of separate spheres, Lowell mills, paternalism

Homework Questions:

1. Why did mill owners select women for their labor force in the textile mills of New England of the 1830s? Who were the women at Lowell? From what background did they come?
2. How was Lowell managed and presented to the world to overcome concern over female factory labor? How did mill owners exercise paternalism over their female workers?
3. What were working conditions like in the Lowell mills? How did workers respond to such conditions?
4. How might the suburbs be a product of the "cult of true womanhood," and the doctrine of separate spheres?
5. According to Barbara Welter, did women of the 1830s see the ideology of separate spheres as oppressive?
6. Why did the National Trades Union oppose female labor? According to the NTU and Mary Paul letters, how does factory labor affect women?